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THREAT SITUATIONS: A SEARCH FOR A CONTROLLED DEFINITION

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Charles A. McClelland, principal investigator of TR&A, has written an initial theoretical treatment of threat processes which (1) assesses the role of threat as an analytic precept in international relations research, and (2) seeks to provide a "controlled" definition of threat. In his paper (TR&A Technical Paper #12), McClelland promotes the notion that threat has not played a central theoretical and/or empirical role in guiding research in international relations. Furthermore, what scant research has been done employing the concept (that is outside of the military context) relies heavily on a common sense understanding of the term. The result of this practice has been to include many forms of international interaction into an "undifferentiated" class of threat behavior. Generally such conglomerations do much to impede the progress of meaningful research, and therefore McClelland proposes several conceptual distinctions worthy of incorporating into a more analytically useful concept of threat.

The purpose of a "controlled" definition of threat is to give the concept differentiating power, -- that is the ability to segregate threat processes from other forms of international behavior. To do this, McClelland highlights the differences between "issued" and "situational" threats. The former type refers to "threats issued by a party and directed to another party" while the latter is seen as a state of a system ("state of affairs") which is threatening. (McClelland, 1974; 5) After making this distinction, McClelland spends the balance of his treatment on situational threats because issued threats have received considerable attention, especially in the military deterrence literature and the experimental research by social psychologists, while situational threats remain largely unexplored.

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Threat Situations:

A Search for a Controlled Definition

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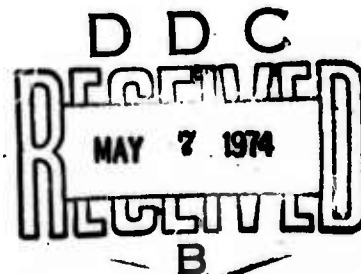
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THREAT SITUATIONS: A SEARCH FOR A CONTROLLED DEFINITION

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January 9, 1974

With a possible exception, threat does not figure as a prominent organizing concept in political science, psychology, or sociology. The exception is in the concept of deterrence and the area of research and theory is national security studies. If national security studies are part of the field of international relations, and if international relations is a sector of political science, then the connection between deterrence and threat may be said to lie in political science. The connection itself is clear enough. Deterrence is a consequence or result achieved by the awareness that threat exists. What this means is well known but should be stated anyway: a party contemplating some line of action directed at another party desists from actually following that line because it is known (or believed) that the recipient party is capable of retaliating with very adverse or even devastating results. This awareness, as comprehended in deterrence thinking, is what we shall call here "threat recognition." In the analytic literature clustering around the concept of deterrence, one finds some excellent discussions of the functions of threat and the effects of threat.

Probably because the stimulus to thinking hard about deterrence was wrapped up with questions and issues of nuclear weapons development, the analysis of the underlying threat element has had a strong military complexion. A consequence is that very little attention has been given in deterrence studies to the problem of detecting threat situations in general or to developing procedures for locating threats in varied settings. The reason merely is that the sources of threat have been well known with regard both to the identities of the national systems where threat originated and to the fundamental nature of the threat, namely in military factors. Thus, it is not surprising to find that threat recognition has not been explored or elaborated to any great extent as theory, as doctrine, or as methodology. At the same time, it is to be emphasized that the analysts of deterrence have used the threat concept and have had interesting and important things to say about it.

We are pointing out simply that threat has not been elevated to a major theoretical role; it does not rank in the class of theoretical constructs occupied by ideas such as power, influence, stratification, dissonance, policy, legitimacy, authority, and conflict. Threat is a muffled concept buried within these larger concerns. It has remained an ancillary and secondary idea.

In some other areas of inquiry where threat has been considered, the same supporting role appears. In game theory and in experimental social psychological work, the factor of threat has usually been taken as given. That is, the effects produced by introducing varying amounts or degrees of unpleasant prospects, incipient deprivation, or serious loss possibilities have been of central interest. The element of threat has served as an independent variable. For example, the famous study with children on the subject of dental care revealed that dramatic previsions of the gruesome consequences of dental neglect had less effect on the subsequent behavior of the subjects than did lesser degrees of "threat."

The purpose of this essay is to inquire into the subject of threat, at first, on common sense grounds and subsequently, with a narrowed frame of reference. "Threat recognition" directed to "threat situations" is the ultimate topic. A "classical" strategy of inquiry will be followed. In fact, Cartesian advice is taken to heart from the following text:

The THIRD /method is/ to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend little by little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex; assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence. (Descartes, DISCOURSE ON METHOD, 1637)

A recent effort to "ascend little by little" in an investigation of the nature of political phenomena defined in terms of authority can be followed in Harry Eckstein, "Authority Patterns: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry," THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW, 67 (December 1973), pp. 1142-1161. Some of Eckstein's categorical distinctions are helpful in delimiting the threat concept and they will be introduced here at a later point.

THE COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THREAT

A starting place, then, is with the reasonably safe assumption that everybody knows what a threat is. Everybody has made a threat at some time and everybody has experienced what "it feels like" to be threatened. Conditions and situations abound in modern life that make it easy to use the language of threat. There is nothing very momentous involved, either in the utterance or the consequence, if one happens to remark that the new morality is a threat to traditional family life. It is commonplace, rather than remarkable, to observe that air pollution from automobile exhausts still is a threat in Tokyo, Athens, Paris, New York, and Los Angeles.

During a short period preceding this writing, news reports included the following threat items:

- * The Arab oil producing countries have reduced the threat to Japan by declaring the latter now to be a "friendly country."
- * A local butchers' union strike has threatened the supply of holiday meats and poultry to food markets.
- * The spreading energy crisis in the United States was reported to have resulted in the layoff of thousands of auto workers and was said to threaten the jobs of thousands more by spring.
- * A letter writer to the newspaper included the line, "I am terrified by the threat to my job."
- * A threat to the freedom of information was noted in a recent action by the Federal Communication Commission that may require the editing of network documentary television programs under the "fairness doctrine."
- * The guerrilla group that claimed responsibility for the hijacking of the Pan Am airliner in Rome threatened more terrorist acts in European countries to dramatize further the Palestinian cause.
- * Reports of other terrorist threats led to extraordinary security measures at the Rome and London airports.
- * The lives of three customers were threatened at

gunpoint during the robbery of a liquor store.

* The use of high sulphur oil in power generating plants was foreseen as a certain threat to the health of elderly persons and those suffering from pulmonary ailments.

* Legal action has been taken against collection agencies that send letters to debtors, threatening that they will not be able to cash checks unless payment is made.

These instances are only a few picked from the daily public communication flow. Anyone can demonstrate to his own satisfaction not only how prevalent the concept of threat is but also how broadly it is connected with different kinds of situations and circumstances. One has merely to watch for appearances of the idea and the term in conversations and communications. It is apparent that the usage is both general and generalized with references serving many expressive and descriptive purposes. Fear, dread, foreboding, anxiety, concern, alarm, menace, danger, terror, disaster, deprivation, death, extinction, and termination are expressions, like threat, that point toward an ominous and unpleasant sector of thought, feeling, and experience.

When we speculate about objects, things, conditions, movements, and values that are exempt from becoming objects of threat or do not serve as the source of threat, we find very little. The threat of overpopulation does not exclude the threat of underpopulation and the threats of the outbreak of war have been matched by ironic observations about the threats that peace brings. Economic recessions and depressions are, of course, foreseen as threatening but the threats latent in affluence in the forms of waste, accelerating consumption rates, and "soft living" have been much emphasized of late. The threat to American national security embodied in the SALT agreements is strong and salient for some individuals and groups today but there are others who are preoccupied by the threats contained in astronomical and escalating defense budgets and in "destabilizing effects" of arms races. The sources and objects of threat appear to approach universal scope.

Under the common understanding, threat is, at once, an idea, an awareness, a feeling, and a projection. It involves both cognition and affect and forecasts a future. In a complex and changing world occupied by growing numbers of individuals who realize it is complex and changing, the evocations of threat probably have been following a rising growth curve. It would make an interesting historical study to trace over a few generations before the present time not

only the fluctuations, cycles, and trends in the volume of threat expressions in the public discourse but also the changing definitions of where threats are believed to arise. It seems likely that new sources and new objects of threat have been discovered constantly and that old ones have lapsed and been forgotten, either because anticipations became realities or because the anticipations turned out to be wrong.

The present purpose is not to look into the social usage of the common concept of threat--the historical sociology of threat, so to speak--beyond establishing firmly that it is prevalent. Instead, the objective is to construct a certain perspective that is anchored in the common understanding. The interesting question is how to go about the modification of the ordinary notion and to elevate it, delimit it, and focus it so that it can serve as an analytical tool of inquiry. We want to keep the "idea that everybody understands" as an intellectual reference point. A scheme is needed, however, --a framework or mechanism--for selecting and organizing data, for attending to insights, and for arriving at judgments about the state of affairs in the world, all approached from a revised perspective on threat. A controlled definition of threat is being sought, in other words. More exactly, a family of definitions should be provided so that the many objects, circumstances, and affairs connected commonly with the threat idea do not fall into one undifferentiated class.

DISTINGUISHING BASIC THREAT TYPES: ISSUED AND SITUATIONAL

The approach to providing conceptual differentiations that we are now about to pursue consists of some dissections of the common sense notion of threat. We begin by dividing the threat concept into two parts. After that is done, attention will be focused on the second part. A final preoccupation is with threat situations as dynamic elements in international affairs. We seek in the end a conceptual framework applicable to the analysis of contemporary international relations in those matters where threat plays a part and where threat recognition and threat assessments are considered to be important.

Threat phenomena can be differentiated by drawing a distinction between:

1. threats issued by a party and directed to another party, and
2. threats comprehended as a state of affairs.

A test on instances and cases is relatively easy to make. Issued threats have an identifiable threatener and an identifiable threat recipient. The relevant questions to ask are: "who is it who makes the threat?" "how, in what form, and with what content is the threat transmitted?" and "who or what is made the target of the threat?" Most often, a direct identification of a communicative act is possible. There are some instances, on the other hand, where a set of actions and/or utterances, no one of which stands clearly as a threat statement, constitutes a threat-in-gestalt. Such instances may fall into a rather slippery category of "tacit communication" but it is to be noted that the communicative act designation still holds.

In the items cited earlier from the flow of the news, the guerrilla organization acting for the Palestinian cause is the threatener, the communication referring to further terrorist attacks is the threat, and the European countries are specified as future threat targets. The gunman in the liquor store is the threatener and threat is a message of possible death for the threatened customers. The collection agency is the threatener when it sends its threats by mail to the people it duns. The other items can be sorted out by use of this simple way of analysis. More difficult to judge is the FCC and the freedom of information item. No direct evidence of threat on the part of the FCC is given, and, indeed, if there is a particular threatener, it seems to be embodied in the application of a policy by a bureaucracy. Thus, government in general might be named as the threatener and all the people may be identified as the threatened. The communicative act is not obvious. The inclination is to put this item on the other side of the line and, therefore, to categorize it as a threat situation rather than an issued-threat.

As the last case shows, the proposed categorization of threat into two types does not always work easily or perfectly. Taxonomic judgment almost always is confronted by such troubles. The test for issued-threats does have some difficulties and differences in judgment are likely to arise on some occasions. Alleged threateners can deny that they threatened. Innocent persons or organizations can be accused of threatening but be unable to prove that they did not. The threatened may be so intimidated that they deny that any threat was made. Conspiracies of silence are possible and sometimes threat identification cannot be made except from a partisan point of view. Despite the complications, the test for the issued-threat generally works. It is sound in principle.

For the present, we are going to set to one side all the instances and inquiries having to do with the class of issued-threats. The investigation of the topic is important and it deserves full attention in a separate treatment. Of the two types, the first is better explored while the second is all but virgin territory with respect to its conceptualization. From here on, therefore, our preoccupation will be with the threat phenomenon comprehended as a situation or as a state of affairs. The term "threat situation" will be used most often to refer to that classification.

TWO FACES OF SITUATIONAL THREAT

It is to be observed that large numbers of the utterances and declarations heard and read in the flow of public communication and that make explicit use of the threat term have an abstract quality. The designations "threat of" and "threat to" very often bracket phenomena or topics of broad scope. The threat to freedom, the threat of war, the threat to security, the threat of "capitalist encirclement," the threat of the spread of communism, the threat to national values, and the threat of "coca cola culture" are all examples. This usage usually is a good clue in the identification of threat situations. These kinds of abstract references generally have in common three cognitive/affective characteristics: 1. they purport to foresee possibilities of undesirable future conditions, 2. they carry the implication that the anticipated adverse outcome need not come about--it is avoidable, evasible, or evitable--, and 3. they communicate concern or alarm.

Two aspects of threat situations need to be brought to mind at this juncture. The "state of affairs" definition of threat suggests strongly that threat must be some kind of "objective" reality external to its observers. The three characteristics set forth just above are psychological in nature. It would appear that threat situations must be "subjective" phenomena because awareness that they "exist" depends on an act of imagining a future outcome. Two mental formulations, or "images," have to be active, in fact, in order to arrive at an awareness of threat. One image must "read" arriving signs and signals about a current state of affairs. This reading of the present is conditioned, presumably, by a number of cognitive and affective factors, among which are direct previous experience and derived knowledge of the past. The observer's personal values and interests affect the "reading" through the first image. The second image has no signs and signals from an external world

to process. Instead, it is self-contained and consists of no more than an ordering of projected thoughts and feelings. The second image is, essentially, a forecast of how things will stand at a future time. Awareness of threat is generated in the compared differences between the first and second images.

Two observers may have good agreement on the reading of the current state of affairs through the first image but they may disagree totally in their judgments about the "existence" of a threat situation. The disagreement is accounted for either by differences in their second, forecasting image or by differences in the comparison of the perceived present and the imagined future. Thus, the images look all important. Although Boulding is thinking about issued-threats, his observation seems correct for threat situations when he remarks, "The significance of a threat lies wholly in the way it is perceived by the parties." (Conflict and Defense, p. 253). If a hundred people happen to share the same combination of first and second images, the hundred will be likely to concur in the identification of the threat. If another hundred have other readings via their images of present and future conditions, they will get other results and will be likely to make judgments of threat that are different from those of the first hundred. The factor of affect in the images looks to be particularly important. When a hundred people not only share a set of these images but also are convinced that the resulting judgments about the future state of affairs is correct--indeed, that it is "the truth"--their threat recognition will be much stronger than that of a hundred people who feel uncertain about the accuracy or "realism" of their second image.

An expected result from the differences in the degree of conviction attached by individuals to the second, future-oriented image ought to be that those with stronger feelings of certainty should win out over those who feel less certain and who remain doubtful or skeptical. The latter should tend to remain silent and the former to give voice to their forebodings about the future. Believers should be inclined to become recruiters and to engage in persuasion to convert doubters to their side. The need to raise alarms, to alert others, and to advance persuasive arguments may account for a reverse flow of effects from the second image back to the first image in the believers. As is well known, strong convictions about future states of affairs tend to feed back on the processing of the signs and signals from the world of the present, picking out and emphasizing from the total flow of arriving reports mostly those that support the image of

the future.

One might suppose that, in the long run, the workings of these mental formulations having to do with threat recognition should result in the convergence of views in a human society. There should develop a consensus, engineered by those with the strongest convictions, on where threat lies and what it portends. This speculation overlooks the anti-threat factor, however. It is obvious that strong convictions can attach to second images in individuals who arrive at opposite mental pictures of the future. The filtering, ordering, and emphasizing functions of the images operate for those whose reading of the future indicates favorable and wanted outcomes. Due to these differences in the mediating effects of cognitive/affective formulations, one man's threat is another man's promise. My warning of impending danger may be your most encouraging sign of forthcoming safety. The clash of opposing images, strongly held, suggests the source of much of the prevailing tension, the conflict, the politics, and the heterodoxy, especially in modern mass societies.

Threat situations, when considered from the standpoint of images, appear to be "wholly" psychological and "subjective" phenomena. They come into existence within people according to mental and emotional processes we have tried to interpret above in terms of the interplay of first and second images. A short name by which to refer to the images and the interplay would be a convenience; henceforth, this "whole thing" will be referenced as "threat prevision." A definition is that threat previsions are patternings of perceptions that are oriented to foreseen future states of affairs that are, at once, undesirable, avoidable, and to be warned against. It is to be recalled now that what we have just called threat previsions cover only one aspect of the full identification of threat situations. The problem remains of accounting for the other aspect, which is that threat situations have a linkage with "objective realities" beyond particular observers.

When reference is made to a state of affairs, the prompting is to make identifications of sensed objects and experienced events. In social science, what men in society do, described from observations of manifested behavior, constitute the data of this "objective reality." The point should not be belabored, but the rock bottom realities either are understandings beyond reasonable dispute (Henry Kissinger can be in Washington or in Rome, but not in both) or they are reports of conditions or developments from eyewitnesses (such as the information based on counting that

a million people starved to death at a certain time and in a certain place). If the supply of fuel to an electrical generating plant is cut off completely, no electricity will be delivered from that plant to consumers. Perceptions and images, no matter how strongly maintained, do not turn on the lights.

A very different version results from considering the nature of threat situations from the standpoint of the data of "real world" conditions and happenings. Practical men of affairs will tend to be impatient with self-consciously directed queries about psychological constructions like threat previsions and will most often prefer to brush aside such concerns. The reason for this is that they know they are dealing with concrete problems and pursuing enterprises and they are well aware that they face risks and dangers in the mounting of their efforts. The aspect of threat that really concerns them is its content. It is the "empirical" side that counts. Any state of affairs considered to contain a threat element is seen to consist of pieces of information ordered according to time. The problem or affair has a history, in other words. There are details of events and developments "on the record" and new reports are updates showing the latest circumstances. The identification of threat comes from seeing ahead to updates expected to appear in future periods. It is the continuity and tendency in the detail of the past record that are used in estimating what the updates will be likely to show, assisted, also, by what insight can be found about the progress of similar instances within memory. There is a tracing of a sequence of changes found on the record and a projection of these from the last update into the future. This can be called properly the tracing of a threat process, where the process is the time-sequenced development of the situation.

When threat situations are viewed from the empirical side and are conceived as developmental processes, the opportunities to carry out analyses are increased. An analyst has work to do, first in organizing newly-arriving information about the situation in terms of the change it reflects, second, in inspecting repeatedly the sequence of change steps or stages that, in total, represent the path of movement of the unfolding situation, and third, in making estimates and devising projections of the form and direction of the movement. The problem of analysis takes shape around the question of what the destination of the path of movement will be, if it continues in its trajectory and is not redirected by some intervention.

THREAT IN SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

It is useful to bring a living system perspective to the charting of the trajectory of change. This is because the system idea helps, in principle, to map the particular locations where change is likely to have important consequences and, therefore, where intervening action may be expected to take effect in redirecting the movement. It is important to specify what is meant in the reference to a system perspective.

A simple and adequate definition of "a system" is that it is two or more entities standing in interaction and that the whole is recognized by an observer. A living system has the addition that the entities are "alive" in the sense that they are ceaselessly on the move due to self-action and hence, are ever-changing. Put more generally and most abstractly, a living entity is an organization of activity. The one conception to be set aside entirely is that of an entity that is fixed and static, moving only on stimulus or disturbance and returning shortly to rest until stimulated or disturbed again. One consequence of holding to the designation of the entity as ceaselessly-active and ever-changing is that it is partly up to the observer to say where the boundary line is between the self-acting of the entity and the inter-actions with other entities and with environments beyond "the system." The observer is constrained, however, by conventional understandings and common sense judgments about the locations of boundaries for both biological and social phenomena. The well-known "levels of analysis" problem arises only when awareness is sharpened that, on the one hand, the familiar designations for entities do not really refer to fixed and permanent "things" but, instead, to constantly shifting patterns of activity and, that, on the other hand, the entity perceived to be standing in interaction with others can most often be seen as a system, itself, when observer attention is directed that way. Complexity results in the understanding of "lesser systems" standing in interaction with other "lesser systems" to constitute a "greater system." The progression may continue in the manner of Chinese boxes contained within Chinese boxes.

The insight that we want to draw from all this for present purposes is a simpler set of observations that: 1. a living system is, without exception, an open, dynamic, ever-changing phenomenon, 2. its entities, as designated, can be expected to manifest self acting and also interacting (with other entities and environments), 3. at any moment in time, the system "has a state of affairs," which is its

condition, and 4. the "state of the system" at any moment of observation is the result of self-acting and interacting. Sequences of change are what one has to observe in living systems. Change moves through time, taking steps along a path, each step being a system "state." The complication is that changes of state even in very simple living systems are products from the interplay of internal and external effects. Further, out of the numerous possible combinations of self-acting and interacting there sometimes arise "emergent" states with attributes and relationships not like those previously seen. It is not an easy matter to trace through a succession of changes of state of a living system. Students of system change, in both biological and social fields, try to find repeating patterns in the sequences. They focus on regular trajectories. In other words, repetitiveness is sought for in the direction of movement over time. Special interest is stimulated when "something goes wrong" in the change of state sequence of a system. The concept of "something going wrong" in a system's process comes close to the meaning previously developed of the threat situation, when the latter is seen from an empirical and analytical viewpoint. The translation that threat has a setting in the operations of systems has the advantage of furnishing a "geography" of threat locations.

Due to the self-acting and interacting phenomena of a living system, some functions of "intaking" or ingesting, some functions of "outputting" or excreting, and some functions of "internal processing" or digesting, converting, or storing are to be expected. The logic is, therefore, that when something goes wrong in the change sequences of a system, the trouble has to be located in one of three places--intake, output, or intervening processing, sometimes referred to as throughput. The occurrence of hurt, damage, or destruction at any one of these "locations" of the entity usually spreads effects at once in two directions: to other entity "locations" and to other entities. This happens because they are all in a persisting, sequential, and dynamic relationship. There are other conceivable tendencies and possibilities. For example, it is possible for the destruction to strike everywhere at once, crushing the whole system in a moment. Johan Galtung, in specifying how "somatic aggressions" occur in human society, lists the kinds of hurts that are imposed at these three entity locations ("Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," JPR, 3 (1969), pp. 174-75).

The preceding discussion of the concept of the open, dynamic, ever-changing, living system and of the relation to it of the threat situation has avoided all "real world"

labels for the entities, the change sequences, and the action relationships. One general illustration can be mentioned to relieve this abstractness. Many diseases affecting organisms--pneumonia and leukemia are cases--are recognized by standard descriptions of their progress in their victims. The descriptions usually give a time series of characteristic state changes in the system of the organism. For pneumonia, the trajectory of successive stages has been described to include infection, consolidation, red hepatization, gray hepatization, resolution, and health. (Ashby, p. 26).

As everyone knows, the monitoring of a number of "vital signs," accomplished in periodic observations on ill patients in hospitals is the usual means of estimating the advance or retreat of illness. It is to be noted that it is not so much the "interacting entities"--lungs, heart, kidneys, liver, etc.- that are monitored but, rather, the system states they are in, considered in their sequences. Vital signs can be regarded as "essential variables" that, from the standpoint of sustaining life, must take values inside a critical range. If the values of an essential variable go beyond the range even for a short time, the system proceeds quickly to a state of affairs that is irreversible and fatal. The physician knows that the potential end state of the sequences of changes upon which he acts is death. In that context, the meaning of threat takes either of two alternative but equivalent forms: the threat OF death or the threat TO survival.

It is difficult to see clearly that the "essential" characterization refers to a condition or state in a system. The following demonstration of a general case (one among several possible ones that might be shown) may be helpful in anchoring this important insight.

For purposes of demonstration showing the trajectories created by change-steps in the values of a set of essential variables, we assume that we are dealing with some living system with the several attributes delineated earlier in the discussion. Since the system will remain without empirical identification, the number of essential variables can be set arbitrarily. Let us say there are seven functions, each capable of taking different states (changing from one condition to another) and each will be found to stay within its critical range while the system is persisting. Thus, seven "essential variables" are to be traced through successive changes. The variables are named V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V6 and V7. For the purposes of the demonstration, we establish that each "V" will be found, upon observation, to

be in one of six "viable" conditions. Let "a" stand for the "best state" evaluated in terms of the sustaining of the system. Then, as in school grades, let "b" be next best, "c" can be average, "d" and "e" will stand for still less satisfactory states. The seventh state, called "f" will signify "fail" or "fatal." Specifically, the meaning is that if an essential variable comes to state "f", its value has gone beyond the critical range. To complete a set of symbols needed for the illustration, we let T stand for time with T1 being the first time of being (or of observation), T2 being the second time, T3 the third, and so on. The whole system situation now can be shown in table form:

***V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
T1 a	a	a	a	a	a	a
T2 b	b	c	c	d	d	b

The table is read in a downward direction with the implicit language of "changed from ... to ...". Thus, we say, V1 changed from "a" to "b", V2 changed from "a" to "a", V3 changed from "a" to "c", etc. Nothing appears, as yet, in the changes from T1 to T2 to suggest a "threat." At most we might worry some about V5 and V6 since, in the change, their conditions have shifted to "below average." Values manifested at T3 might even relieve this slight worry, for example:

***V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
T1 a	a	a	a	a	a	a
T2 b	a	c	c	d	d	b
T3 a	a	c	b	b	b	a

V5 and V6 have now "recovered" and some others are moving apparently in a "favorable direction" (i.e., back toward an optimum state). When we watch for signs like these and keep in mind the shifts over time, we are beginning to engage in the analysis of a process. A gain is made when an observer is able to see some pattern (or regularity) in the composite change picture.

For purposes of a demonstration of a change sequence resembling a threat process, we can fabricate a suitable pattern. There are many ways to do this. For instance, V4 can be given attention as a "leading part" of the system. V4 can be made a change agent for V3 and V5. If V4 changes to a state any place in the range of "a" through "f", that will result in V3 and V5 changing also, but at the next step. Further, the same effect can be declared for V3 "acting on"

V2 and for V5 "acting on" V6. All this causes an outward spreading chain reaction. The specific process can be made visual:

***V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
T1	a	a	a	a	a	a
T2	a	a	b	a	a	a
T2	a	a	b	c	b	a
T3	a	b	c	d	c	b
T5	b	c	d	e	d	c
T6	c	d	e	f	e	d
T7	d	e	f	f	e	d
T8	e	f	f	f	f	e
T9	f	f	f	f	f	f

A progression from life to death is one interpretation of the trajectory portrayed above. We also see that the notion of "threat" makes some sense. In fact, it emerges step by step between T2 and T5. At T6, the anticipation turns into the real thing; by the time the change at T6 occurs, it is already too late to do anything because one of the seven "essential variables" has crossed over into the irreversible fail condition. To act in time to save the system from ruin involves doing something to reverse the trend in the V4 trajectory no later than at T5. "Going to the brink" amounts to the following:

***V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
T1	a	a	a	a	a	a
T2	a	a	b	a	a	a
T3	a	a	b	c	b	a
T4	a	b	c	d	c	b
T5	b	c	d	e	d	c
T6	a	b	c	d	c	b
T7	a	a	b	c	b	a
T8	a	a	a	b	a	a
T9	a	a	a	a	a	a

The spreading effects of oncoming ruin have been caught in time and, presumably, either by some intervention or through some "natural" regulatory process, the system has moved back into its best condition. Needless to say, the recovery shown is only one possibility; for example, some damage might have been done so that one or more essential variables could never return to the "best" condition.

In the system that has been charted above, it could be observed that only V4 is an essential variable because the

others relate to it dependently and only receive effects instead of exchanging them. It is conceivable, however, that other change patterns exist for other sets of circumstances and that, in the other instances, some other process might be at work. This says, in effect, that there are a number of roads to ruin. Threat does not arise necessarily in only one form and from only one direction.

AN ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING SITUATIONAL THREATS

A keyword in the identification of threat situations in social systems now has been used. It is "ruin." The intention is to employ that word to describe the potential end state for a social system in parallel to "death" or "extinction" for the potential end state for biological systems. We are prepared to allow a teleological answer to the question, what "purpose exists" supplying motivation to the unending activity of living systems and to their unceasing responses to changing circumstances. For systems recognized at the biological level, the "purpose" is the urge for the survival of the life form and against the prospect of immediate death or extinction. The struggle cannot be taken to be against the end state, itself. For individuals, the end state is inevitable and, philosophically viewed, it probably is inevitable also at some time for the system. Instead, the struggle is to put off the coming of the end state--to make the inevitable temporarily evitable. The foregoing is an uncertain declaration in some aspects; we are best off to stand aside from the vitalism argument and also to try to stay out of beckoning epistemological quicksands.

The answer for social systems, however uncertain it may be, has a modification and is, therefore, slightly different from that for biological systems. We argue that human social orders do not regularly "die out" or "become extinct." Rome, for example, may have suffered "decline and fall" and, as a culture, a society, a polity, and an economy, it may have been fractured and severely transformed but the Roman continuance is an inescapable fact as experienced in thousands of manifestations extending to the present day. Continuation is the built-in motivating power--the basic "purpose"--behind the unceasing activity and the perennial response to change in human social systems. No matter how adverse the conditions or disillusioning the arrangements of society today, almost all men will get up tomorrow and try one more time to participate in social life.

There are individuals who are so deeply sunk in anomie and suffer such severe discouragement that they cease to engage in this characteristic behavior. Some island societies in the Pacific are said to have become extinct due to the impact of European ways on their cultures. A reason proposed for the dying out has been that the individual members simply lost their "zest" to carry on. Here, it may be said that social extinction may have preceded biological extinction. The rare exceptions serve to prove the rule, however, and suggest, possibly, that the urge to social continuation is not an instinct or an automated response built in to man's biological nature. David Easton, in accounting for the "reason" for political systems, has pointed to persistence as a causal element. Clearly, the two formulations are similar.

Ruin, as a general descriptor of the foreseen result when "something goes wrong" with social system continuation, does not need to mean the same thing as extinction or system-death. For an individual, the ruin at the gaming table, the ruin in the stock market, or the ruin of a political scandal, does not signify "the end." It does mean, most often, a drastic change of circumstances, a break with the past, and, usually, the need to "pick up the pieces" and to start again. Ruin for a social system can be partial and non-fatal.

Inflation in a national economy can "wipe out" its middle class, creating as a result vastly different conditions in both the economy and the society, but the national system can maintain an unbroken continuity in history. Similarly, a country can lose its most talented youth in a bloody war, as has been said of France in World War I, and suffer partial ruin for the next fifty years. The country may be held to have been made very different by the loss--indeed, it can be seen as a quite different place from what it was--but the sequences of unfolding change in the public life mark out the social continuation, however different from past processes.

We have now come to the delineation of what a threat situation is in a social system when the "threat" is approached from an empirical, "facts-in-the-world," and analytical standpoint. A threat situation is defined, finally, as a particular sequence of change-steps, these being successive system states still emerging in the social system with the potential end state being a condition of ruin. The threat process is the whole time series of the sequence of change, not stopping with the last observations of the state of affairs, but projecting onward to

the potential end state represented in the ruin outcome. This is the definition of threat that is at the foundation of an analytical framework that should be fleshed out with empirical detail whenever competent assessments of threat are required. Let us be specific about the basic requirements for such assessment.

Suppose the proposition is advanced importantly and strongly that a certain, named threat to the security of the United States has arisen. The position being taken here is that the supporting case behind the contention should be backed by research and analysis and should include the following ingredients: 1. the detailed estimate of the outcome anticipated for the United States if no preventive action occurs, 2. a tracing of what has already taken place in the development of the threat situation, cast in terms of a trajectory of change steps, 3. a specific projection into the future to the point of the foreseen ruin outcome, and 4. a presentation of the step-details of how the trajectory of future change is expected to unfold when recommended intervening actions take effect. It is important to impose such analytic discipline on the formulations of threat assessments for the national system, although there is little public indication that anything like the requirements just specified currently are being followed. The prime reason for not defending cases so thoroughly was mentioned at the very beginning of this account: for twenty years, the identity of the threat has been believed to be certain. The current insight that new threats are appearing from new quarters lends legitimacy to the urging toward improved approaches and procedures.

The preoccupation with the "objective" side of threat situations has led to conclusions that appear to displace entirely the "subjective" threat provisions aspect. Yet, it was declared earlier that the images of the situation are "all important." How are the two views to be reconciled? It may have been noted that the terms "objective" and "subjective" have been kept within quotation marks consistently. That is a clue to how the two aspects in threat recognition of prevision and process are thought to be complementary. It will be recalled from the treatment of threat provisions that: 1. the first of the two images was conceived as a window on the world through which a selective view of the current state of affairs is obtained and 2. the comparison of the current view against the conceived future is the source of the prevision.

It might be thought that the analytic procedure related to the detailing of the threat process amounts to no more

than the spelling out of the prevision comparison. There are considerations that prompt a different notion. The first is that the very large numbers of expressions of threat-awareness found so readily in the flow of public communication rarely display even the rudiments of the tracing of change sequences of the threat process. A second consideration is that the cognitive/affective combination in the formation of a threat prevision seems to work like a discovery. The apperception "dawns" as a whole thing and at once without any need of step-by-step cerebrating. It is as if individuals in society were scanning the horizons constantly for danger signs. When danger is sighted, something like a warning shout is raised. The individual's discovery, in a flash, so to speak, gets communicated to others and functions like an alarm signal. It is the awareness that counts most; primarily, the threat prevision is expressive. It brings to mind a function for human society something like that of the signals of the possible approach of predators emitted "expressively" by sentinels of herds of grazing animals. Threat previsions seem to be arrived at directly in leaps of apperception.

The expressive quality of threat prevision contrasts with the analytic quality of threat process identification.

It is not enough to say that the two modes of threat recognition--one expressive and the other analytic--appear concurrently. Rather, it seems best to see them in a transactional relationship with each affecting the other. The "subjective"--"objective" distinction is wrong, therefore, to the extent it separates what is best taken to be an intermixture. The factual basis of a threat situation is modified by the imagery of the prevision while the prevision is conditioned by empirical influences.

It is to be proposed that the observation of the expressions of threat awareness, standing as warnings of potential danger, may be the best research approach to FINDING threat situations. Empirical data can be gathered for these expressions as well as for any other kind of communicative behavior. One possibility would be to assemble the evidence of expressive threat in public communication, to convert it to quantitative data, and to use the data in the study of psychopolitical conditions within national social systems. Similarly, the analysis of evidence of change trajectories of the threat process may be the best research approach for IDENTIFYING threat situations. The two approaches, taken together, amount to a methodology of threat recognition for threat situations.

THREAT RECOGNITION RESEARCH

An ongoing research program whose purpose is to keep watch on the development of important situational threats has need for procedures that are efficient in discovering new threats and identifying the process of their development. Thus, a design of an investigation has two distinct steps. The first requires a constant assembling of data registering the awareness that exists of possible dangers ahead. The volume, velocity, and content of such expressive evidence should be monitored according to the analogy of the measurement of a flowing stream. The objectives should be to discover new threat situations as soon as they appear on the horizon and to keep account of those already in sight. The second step is preoccupied with the threat process and places under scrutiny a small number of the total of situational threats appearing in the stream. The problem of deciding which few to "put under the microscope" for intensive analysis has obvious importance. To this point in the discussion, threat situations in social systems at large have been considered without any narrowing and focusing on particular systems and on levels within particular systems. The remaining topic for discussion, therefore, has to do with possible criteria of selection oriented by particular system and level considerations.

A sharp reduction in the number of candidate cases for analysis at the second step will occur as soon as the test of the end state of the process is applied. The common usage in conversation and communication relates threat to a wide variety of anticipated outcomes, not necessarily ruinous but simply adverse, depriving, unwanted, unpleasant, or disadvantaging. The end state of ruin, as defined earlier, when applied as a criterion of selection will result in a narrowing of the field. The application of the rule of the "ruin factor" is allowable under the strategy of modifying and elevating the common understanding of threat in order to sharpen it as an analytical tool. The same end is served by introducing one more requirement: we want to elevate the threat concept so that it bears only on those situational threats that can be brought into a foreign policy setting and that can be calibrated to international behavior. The requirement is to bring a focus on national social systems and on the actions and responses passing between national social systems.

Care needs to be taken with the resulting selection rules because the interior structure of any particular

national social system cannot be ignored safely in investigating threat contexts of foreign policy and international politics. If Canada is named as the national social system of interest and we want to arrive at estimates of Canadian national responses to international situational threats, as perceived by Canadians, we cannot afford to give attention only to the highest levels of Canadian government and to official pronouncements delivered from those quarters. Instead, we need to follow the idea that there are formative processes going on within Canada--in the interior structure of the social system--and that, therefore, threat elements need to be traced to the inside. To be taken into account conceptually are levels including individual Canadians, Canadian groups, networks of Canadian groups, Canadian organizations, networks of Canadian organizations, and, "at the top," the Canadian state-organization that is not a monolith but, instead, an interlocking set of different offices, bureaus, and agencies.

It may appear that the idea of considering the interior of the social system and its processes ends up to mean that one needs to know everything about Canada before the determination is made of how situational threats affect Canadian international actions. That might be a fair conclusion if no limiting concepts were provided to guide the picking and choosing of relevant factors and appropriate ranges of data. We are able to illustrate that it is possible to trace selectively the connections from international concerns to the lowest "level"--the individual. We can also begin to show that conceptual assistance is both needed and possible in accounting for the rise of some threat perceptions to high public prominence at the national political level.

Survey research on the hopes and fears of individuals has indicated that, indeed, connections are made between threat feelings and international relations, but that they frequently are made in highly personalized terms. A mother sees a threat in a foreign war in the dread that if her son is drafted and sent overseas, he could be killed "because of the international relations" of the war. Consumers worry about high prices for food but they experience foreign policy situational threat to the extent they relate food sales to the Soviet Union and other countries to a possible future date when their incomes may be too small to cover their necessary food purchases. The fearful previsions of individuals of threat to their communities (whether these be peasant villages, towns, city states, or nations) at the hands of armed invaders and of the preseen personal ruin of being made captive probably are universal formulations of

individual-to-foreign affairs threat perceptions.

An organizational context of threat recognition brought to the international level is illustrated by the situation of the American aerospace industry a few years ago. Personal ruin was experienced eventually by workers who lost their means of livelihood: an anticipated outcome seen very early. The threat dawned in the perceived connection between the possible loss of employment and the termination of government contracts for the procurement of military hardware. The end of the contracts was linked to changes in defense policy and the changes in defense policy were linked to changed conditions in international relations. In this interesting case, lessened international threat was felt to cause increased personal threat, at least to some aerospace employees.

The understanding of threat recognition in a foreign policy setting should begin with the appreciation that it traces invariably to individual human beings and to their perceptions. The experience of threat occurs for individuals. The constant changes in large, complex social systems guarantee that some individuals always will be suffering inconvenience, disadvantage, or sometimes disaster from the effects of change while others will enjoy advantages or be unaffected. Further, it can be depended upon that some individuals will be sensitive enough to detect forthcoming effects of damaging change and will be alarmed sufficiently by what they foresee to issue warnings.

Sometimes, the sources of change are entirely "domestic" and do not extend effects outside the borders of the national system. On other occasions, the effects do pass strongly to other national systems. Seen from a threat recipient's point of view, the sources of change come from abroad and are capable of penetrating deeply, visiting damage on interior sectors of the national system. It appears mysterious that, in some affairs, the progress of ruinous change, even when well-recognized and reported, is greeted passively and is allowed to continue to its end state in some sector of the interior social structure. At other times, there is a mobilization of national effort to head off the effects of change and to prevent foreseen damaging outcomes. The collective response to threat appears to be inconsistent.

From the standpoint of empirical observation, then, it is demonstrable that threat awareness and response to threat, whether due to sources of change at home or abroad, are not confined to the highest levels of national

government and to officials at that level. The interior reaches of national social systems at levels of individuals, groups, and organizations also are involved but the process of involvement is variable and not readily explained.

Conceptual assistance is needed to account for why, when, and under what circumstances, a prevision of a threat situation expands from a solitary warning to a mobilized national concern. Awaiting explanation also is why so many threat previsions, set forth with prophetic accuracy, escape national attention and action until it is too late--until the damage is done. Some recent political theorizing provides a few guiding ideas for approaching these puzzling issues. We should be warned to not expect too much from them, however.

The possibility should be kept to the forefront that there may be no set of general statements that could take into account all national societies and that would explain the spread of threat awareness to the national level. Large differences in political and social arrangements as well as great contrasts in the size and complexity of national societies tend to discourage hopes of finding single, comprehensive explanations to cover all cases. Common knowledge about these disparities, when pairs of nations are named and called to attention for comparison, supports the view that each case may need to be analyzed according to its own nature. What common accounting is conceivable for China and Denmark, for Uganda and the Soviet Union, or for the United States and Libya? Research designs may be required for each individual society. Nevertheless, the following conceptualizations may serve at least as a starting point for research.

Several commonplace observations are to be made about how the national diffusion of situational threat awareness takes place. There is, obviously, a relationship between the occurrence of threat-related catastrophes and the spread of public awareness that threats exist. National and international newsgathering agencies are attuned to catastrophic occurrences of all kinds and they respond rapidly by transmitting detailed accounts to their mass media outlets of press, radio, and television. The practice of public communication stands behind one generalization about the diffusion of threat-awareness: threat situations that develop in dramatic, "newsworthy" change steps will receive more public attention more quickly than threat situations that develop gradually by small and/or slow increments. Most often, the gradually developing type of threat must wait for a culminating catastrophic event at the

end of a period of gestation before widespread attention is directed to its presence. Only after a dramatic happening are earlier warnings recalled and the long sequence of prior development of the situation reviewed.

The probability increases after a dramatic happening that corrective or countering programs of action will materialize. Spectacular events connected to situational threat in the way just described commonly produce several results: 1. they cause a temporary peaking of public interest in both the events and the underlying threat situation, 2. they advance the priority position of the underlying situation to a higher place on the list of "problems awaiting solution," 3. they suppress doubts and reduce skepticism and produce an increased readiness to respond to the next manifestations of the situational threat, 4. they tend to trigger a shift from passive to active awareness, and 5. they tend to legitimize calls and demands for corrective or preventive programs of action.

The catalytic effect of the dramatic event on the passive-to-active awareness shift is particularly interesting. Passive situational threat awareness may be widely diffused in a national population but it spurs little action. It consists of the recognition that at some indefinite future time some ruinous development has a likelihood of taking place and that "somebody" should be doing something about it meanwhile. Repeated warnings do little more than raise the "worry level." The identity of the "somebody" who should be doing something usually remains as indefinite as the expected date of the coming catastrophe. The active shift has the result of changing the time perspective from the remote to the immediate and of focusing the question of who has the capability, the authority, and the responsibility to meet the "problem." The knowledge is common that affairs in complex modern societies frequently are managed "by emergency" in a crisis context.

The triggering effect of a dramatic event often provides the chance that the head of a national government has been waiting for to launch a program of action. The peaking of active situational threat awareness in a national public presents a passing opportunity for a national leader to override the political opposition that normally restrains him, to issue a call for national unity and a common effort, and to appeal for the acceptance of changes that at other times would be met by serious opposition or by indifference. Some imagery found readily in nationalistic history books commonly becomes involved: the leader sees the threat, he issues the call of "the country in danger," the citizens,

hearing his message and understanding that their personal safety and the safety of the nation are one, set aside their usual pursuits and interests to rally to the cause. Only after the danger subsides do the citizens return to their normal rounds.

Whether or not this sequence of response to threat has taken place in the past, it is well-known that modern national societies follow more complex political processes. National social systems contain myriads of corporate entities, both public and private, that have governing capabilities and that extend across contingently-autonomous domains or spheres of control and influence. Individuals hold multiple memberships in these corporate entities and some play roles in their management. Their structures ordinarily are hierarchical. The interactions among these numerous authority-bearing corporate entities, both public and private, are variable and include both cooperative and conflictful modes of conduct. The relationships among the numerous entities (Eckstein calls them variously, social units, collective individuals, public and private governments, complexes of rule and hierarchy, and corporate bodies) take on a roughly pyramidal shape from the standpoint of the national society as a whole. The important point about the hierarchical arrangement of relations among the myriads of power and control entities within the national society is that the pyramid is very untidy, very contingent, and very changeful. It is a heap of mobile elements rather than a neatly engineered structure. In other words, the structure has the interactive qualities of living systems.

The foregoing is a foreshortened and partial version of Harry Eckstein's structural definition of politics as "authority patterns." Those interested in the full argument (that is accepted in this discussion) should consult Eckstein's presentation, cited earlier.

INFLUENCES ON THREAT RESPONSE

The consequences of the typical conversion of situational threat awareness by the mass media from low status to high status in the national public view and, also, of the usual call to action by the national leader are by no means as straightforward and simple as the country-in-danger response by all the citizens makes out. Several psychopolitical factors playing on the multitudes of authority patterns of the national society exert influence on what the total national behavioral response to an

activated situational threat will be.

Given a legitimized signal of great impending danger issued by the highest national authority, a series of calculations of the effects of the dawning threat commences. Responses to the expected change steps of the threat process depend on the push and pull of anticipated consequences and these begin with the individual. The push on the individual is to join in the national effort, to accept sacrifices, and to acknowledge the "common fate" of self and society. This push is offset by the pull of reflections on self-safety and self-preservation. The pull away from the common cause reflects in answers to questions such as, will I be hurt, personally, in the situation? can I act to avoid losses? is there some way for me to evade the adverse consequences that most people will suffer? is there an adjustment I can make so that I would even profit and prosper despite the misfortunes of others? The choice is to make an associative response or a dissociative one, but most people consider evasion or compromise. If there is some perceived decisional latitude, many will make a token associative commitment and, at the same time, will avoid the more serious deprivations or sacrifices they are encouraged to undertake.

Corruption is encouraged by the push-pull effects on individuals from the activation of an important situational threat. As is certain to happen, some parties are presented with windfall opportunities in the action programs that respond to national threat. They are tempted by calculations of self-gain to become staunch supporters of an associative decision. For them, the crisis environment stimulated by the threat is profitable and, therefore, is worth supporting. Self-aggrandizement, whether it takes the form of monetary rewards, increased authority, or improved personal security, is as hard to resist as the advocacy of devotion to the common struggle, however costly (to others). The tendency toward personal corruption is strong in the strain created by the open choices between associative commitment and dissociative self-protection so that the individual often finds himself voicing noble associative sentiments while busily committing dissociative deeds.

From the standpoint of research directed at the investigation of national responses to activated threat situations, it is unlikely that good data can be developed on associative-dissociative decisions at the individual level by the available methods of sample surveying and interviewing. This is because of the corruptive tendency and the need by individuals to cover-up the inclination to speak one way and act another. Perhaps, all that can be done is to

gauge the overall result from the vast numbers of private calculations that tip either toward associative commitment or dissociative adaptation. Individuals can shift their calculations and behavior according to how the situation develops and according to how others influence them.

All that has been said about the threat responses of individuals applies to the corporate entities or "collective individuals." Some important differences and additions also appear at this level. Individuals who are choice-makers in authority-bearing groups and organizations are capable of making decisions and acting in ways different from their behaviors in the capacity of private persons. As officials and role-holders, they must calculate in different terms. Eckstein points to the importance of direction-giving to the corporate entity by those in the upper positions of the organizational hierarchy: "The direction of a social unit involves the definition of its goals, the regulation of conduct of its members, and the allocation and coordination of roles within it." (APSR, Vol. 67, p 1154).

Because those who manage the various corporate entities in a national society--in both the public and private sectors-- play the roles of protector and promoter of their own enterprises, their calculations of the effects from the mobilized national reaction to threat come as naturally as for the individual operating on his own account. The big difference is in the approximate reversal of the response tendencies of corporate authorities in the face of the associative-dissociative choice options. The individual in considering his personal situation generally inclines toward associative responses to national appeals for unified effort and toward the acceptance of some self-depriving adjustments to the situation. The push on the individual is in the associative direction. On the other hand, the individual playing the part of guardian and director of the corporate entity has a deeply-ingrained inclination to respond to the push of the dissociative force. The protection of the corporate domain comes first against all external competition and external adversity: managers "have no right" to sacrifice the interests of the collectivity on any account. The countering pull toward the associative response becomes strong for the corporate entity only in the presence of one or the other of two foreseen conditions: 1. the corporate entity is calculated by its managers to be a certain casualty in the unfolding of the threat situation or 2. the corporate entity is calculated to stand to benefit from foreseen changes of circumstances or changes of relations brought about by the national response to the activated situational threat. The corporate entity has

resources not usually available to private persons to advance its "negative" goal of self-protection and self-advantage in the presence of threat. It can mobilize its internal resources and shape the preferences and choices of the individuals within its authoritative domain and it can join forces and forge temporary alliances with other corporate entities in similar circumstances.

Lawrence Mohr, in conceptualizing the character of organizational goals, reviews the great complexity of the topic and the difficulty encountered by theorists and analysts in understanding this complexity. He identifies two classes of organizational goals that appear to have some bearing on the discussion of the responses to situational threat. Transitive goals are to be distinguished from reflexive goals (Lawrence B. Mohr, "The Concept of Organizational Goal," AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW, 67 (June 1973), 470-81). Reflexive goals are internally oriented goals extending across a broad band of interests and objectives having to do primarily with maintenance, direction, and support within the organization. Transitive goals are defined as those that are externally oriented in the sense that they have the objectives of causing effects and producing results beyond the organization and into other environments. These categorizations have some importance for threat assessment because they suggest other options that corporate entities have available in their confrontations with active situational threats. A negative, defensive cast is given to Mohr's conceptualization in the threat setting.

On first sight, the reflexive-transitive terminology appears to be just an alternative naming of the associative-dissociative response categories in the threat context. Reflexive goes with dissociative and transitive with associative. We note a difference, however: corporate entities in their calculations of positions to take in response to threat often have a choice to make of absorbing threat effects or acting to pass them on to others--transmitting them into the environment, so to speak. The Civil War draftee who bought a substitute provides an individual example of passing on the threat (the transitive line) but we are likely to judge the case also as belonging in the category of dissociative responses. An oil company that passes on increased costs to consumers during an energy "crisis" can take up a strong associative posture in support of the national effort to counter the threat of the shortage but follow a transitive goal (although it would be judged "negative" in Mohr's sense). If the same company made extra profits and strengthened its position in the industry during the emergency, its policy pursuit could be considered

reflexive but its threat response could still be associative. A political group or association that exploited a national economic crisis by fomenting labor unrest and strikes with the aim of embarrassing or even overthrowing the government would furnish a case of the dissociative-transitive combination. Finally, a government bureau that exploited a threat-induced emergency situation to increase its budget, to expand its personnel, and to strengthen its position for bureaucratic infighting would be following a reflexive and associative line.

The question of what causes the spread and elevation of a certain threat prevision from the time of its first appearance to the time when it prompts the national political leadership to declare a "country in danger" type of emergency has a complicated answer. We have attempted to show above that the net societal response depends on many terms in a complex equation, about which we can claim to know something but far less than we need to know. The demands of the problem come into full focus when the whole matter is approached in terms of forecasting. The analytical approach to threat recognition calls for the study of threat prevision and threat process in sequences that begin with a recognition of the earliest expressive warnings of situational threat and that culminate in the tracings of the development details of the threat process. The forecasting problem is to decide on which few among the many expressive warnings eventually will warrant full attention. What are the chances that one particular prevision, detected early, will be sustained and amplified and will find the intricate pathways through the authority and legitimacy patterns of a national society to a position of national prominence? This is the way the problem needs to be approached, even if it defies solution.

The response to a threat situation turns, of course, on what the threat is at the transactional nexus where reports and perceptions meet. Attributes of the threat make a difference: we noted earlier the speed of development and the size and character of the step changes of the threat as factors relating to the spread of public awareness. No doubt, there are other influencing traits to be considered. The aggregate effect produced by vast numbers of individuals is a factor in determining whether or not threat awareness and response will be sustained. There is, also, a question of whether the sensitivity of the location of threat at the intake, throughput, and output of a system makes much of a difference; there is no basis for even making a guess at the answer. All influencing elements considered, it would appear that the evaluations of the gravity, the risks, and the

opportunities in the threat made by directors of the corporate entities of a national society have the most to do with the chances of a situational threat to reach the pinnacle of national attention and mobilization. The observation just made merely calls attention to the importance of governing elites.

Some readers may have been prompted by the frequent appearance of the word "corporate" in the preceding discussion to interpret corporate entities to refer to private business corporations, to industrial firms, or commercial associations. An easy transition could be made from this misunderstanding to the interpretation of the comments offered to the effect that national governments merely are the tools of capitalist enterprise. Scholars from socialist countries might claim (and probably would) that their national systems are exempt from the push-pull effects and the diffused and multiple authority patterns that have been referred to here. Such claims and interpretations are to be rejected.

The contention is that all national societies contain numbers of authority-wielding entities whose jurisdictions and interactions are less than fixed with machine-like precision but are, instead, uncertain, contingent, varying, and often confused or blurred. The entities are by no means restricted either to economic activities or to official functions. In countries that have public and private sectors, the corporate entities exist in both sectors and extend influences from one to the other and in both directions. Where business firms wield substantial authority and have conditional powers of private government (Standard Oil and General Motors in the United States, for example), they are, indeed, among the corporate entities of importance. In the national systems of those socialist countries where the private sector has been reduced to the vanishing point, the competing, cooperating, overlapping, interrelating corporate entities flourish in the official governmental sector. They divide, in fact, the sovereignty that, in theory, resides at the top of the governmental hierarchy and that, again in theory, is distributed down a coherent chain of command to the lowest societal levels. We have argued instead that the realities are like those of living systems: somewhat disordered, quite wasteful, amply redundant, and constantly in ebb and flow. The form and arrangement of official government are but one important component among others in the national society. The responses to threat are refracted in both capitalist and socialist societies and are made inconstant and uncertain by these living system characteristics.

THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECT

When we turn attention to the general circumstances that convert national threat mobilizations into international concerns or that stimulate active threat awareness within national societies due to events and developments abroad, we find the problems of understanding to be simpler. By comparison, the international aspects of situational threat are easier to comprehend than the complex national processes that either expand or contract threat responses.

The basic idea of defense is simple. National diplomatic and military policies achieve legitimacy in the claim that their prime objective is to safeguard the domestic society against foreign predation. Under a "hard" interpretation, it is assumed that every foreign power, given an opportunity and the capability, will subjugate the domestic society for its own ends, unless a defense is maintained. According to the extreme "hard" reading, situational threat is latent everywhere; its forms are varied and include military, economic, social, and psychological methods and manifestations. Threat analysis need go no further than the study of opportunity and capabilities.

Under a "soft" interpretation, foreign threats are occasional and arise mostly when there is a breakdown in the normal exchange practices between and among national systems. An extreme "soft" view is that national defense requirements are minimal and that, as in the case of incessant change within the national system with its constant effects of partial ruin in some sectors, national systems would be best off to absorb most of the adverse consequences from international system relations. In the terminology employed earlier, the polar interpretations of "hard" and "soft" amount to a thoroughgoing dissociative reaction in the first and a thoroughgoing associative reaction in the second. As one would expect, prevalent views combine hard and soft elements and shift in varying combinations according to historical developments.

J. David Singer has remarked that security is the scarcest commodity in the international system. The feeling of being vulnerable coexists, however, with a desire to gain benefits or protection through association. The interactions between national systems tend to alternate, therefore,

between two conditions. When danger signals from abroad are few and weak --or, in other words, when the feelings of vulnerability are reduced and situational threat is minimal--national systems incline toward actions and responses that are trustful and mutually benefiting. They intertwine their affairs, make commitments of future association, and allow themselves to become progressively more interdependent. In such times and under such circumstances, the signs are read hopefully that international politics are becoming more like national politics. Like national corporate entities that calculate their positions and take the consequences within the accommodating environment of the national community, national systems are thought to be following an irreversible route toward membership in an international community. Much is made, also, of the apparent community-building effects from multi-national associations of sub-national corporate bodies (such as the "brotherhoods" of military general officers, scientists, or labor union leaders and the global cartels of oil and electronic enterprises).

Fairly long historical periods of associative relations are possible but they also are subject to interruption. The very success of the associative mode of international interaction often becomes the cause of a turning back in the direction of the dissociative mode. A dramatic episode usually is the immediate cause. The most recent of the big threat-arousing episodes occurred in October 1973 in the Arab-Israeli war and the associated oil producers' embargo. These events aroused an activated international situational threat. The shift from passive to active threat awareness of world oil shortages and dependencies took place in the wake of the events. International interactions moved strongly toward the dissociative mode. It was known perfectly well that Japan and the western European countries had allowed, little by little, a major dependency to grow up on Middle East and Gulf petroleum but the perceived "threat" in the situation was diffused and was no more than a worry.

The push and pull of national calculations became apparent as soon as the dramatic events activated the threat. The choice between associative and dissociative responses to the threat by the affected national systems reproduced the common problem faced by corporate entities within the national system. The Japanese government took pains to make it clear that Japan would not take part in a united front of oil consuming nations. West Germany, France, and Britain each began separate negotiations with oil producing countries, hoping for agreements to guarantee access to needed energy supplies. At the same time, the

worry was expressed that "going it alone" would create intolerable conditions compared to those that might be secured through cooperative actions. Like the corporate entities within national systems, the national governments were attracted in both directions. At the time of this writing, the impulse toward the dissociative choices appear to have become the stronger.

At moments of highest awareness that great threat has become inescapable, a double effect makes its appearance: within nations, the associative response becomes dominant and between nations, the dissociative response becomes paramount. This may be the secret of why the international system of sovereign territorial nation-states has proved to be so tough and resilient and why it has not yielded to new global forms and relations. Just at the times when the associative resources that have grown up in periods of low threat are put to the test, they are overridden by dissociative sentiments at the international level. National systems recoil against the risks and ruin possibilities of the associative choice and prefer to make realignments, to shape new commitments, and to mobilize internally to save themselves as best they can. In the international system, the making of commitments by one national system with others is a chief means of approaching common defense by association. For this reason, an important instrument of research on international situational threat is the study of the change patterns of commitment during the transitions between low and high threat awareness periods. Commitment patterns are an indicator of the net situation in relations between national systems.

The leading editorial in THE TIMES on the last day of 1973 conveyed in most succinct language the basic nature of the typical national response to grave situational threat. Because the statement of the situation is both exact and topical, the main passage is presented below as a summary of the foregoing generalizations:

The instinct that calls for national unity at a time of uncertainty and hardship is an instinct to be trusted. True as it is that the scale and interpenetration of economic activity in the modern world require to be answered by regional grouping, supranational organization, and other collaborative machinery, the nation state remains for the time being the primary unit of political action. That is because it alone is furnished with plenary government, and because it most readily awakens in the people composing it recognition of

shared political identity and of a common interest. . .

So, while it goes without saying that very close attention needs to be paid to the international aspects of the present crisis the unity of the nation is of a prior order of importance. People recall, as if to conjure up again, the national unity of 1940-45. It will not do. There was then an external threat, pointing at all and plain to see--the threat of defeat in war. And it called into existence from the threatened one overriding aim to the pursuit of which most other things could be subordinated--victory in war.

The matter has only to be stated for it to be seen how different is the crisis of these times. There is a sense of menace, but its shape is indistinct, its origin disputable and its precise effects hard to predict. Nor is it beyond argument what kind of mobilization is required to confront it. Hyper-inflation could dissolve the fabric of this society and rob us of our liberties: a reversal of the long postwar upward trend in the general standard of living, as well as being painful in itself, could undermine political order. But these threats are not palpable, picturable and indisputable in the way that Panzer divisions in the Pas de Calais were.

The contemporary British crisis brings circumstances to the fore that we have not considered: the presence of multiple threats with both domestic and international origins. Threats converge from all sides on Britain--severe balance of payments problems, energy shortages, civil disorder in northern Ireland, strong inflation especially in housing and food prices, coal mining and transportation strikes, credibility gaps in politics, and substantial social tensions. How should a society so beset be expected to respond?

An insight, certainly as old as the classical era of the Greek city states, holds that a regime faced by insuperable domestic difficulties will seek escape in the distractions of foreign ventures, very frequently these being aggressive military undertakings. Hitler's rise to power and the militarization of the Third Reich have been accounted for on such grounds. Sadat's Egypt has been suspected of responding to the same dynamic: of projecting multiple threats from the domestic scene into the foreign

scene. It is interesting that nobody is anticipating seriously that a British revolutionary regime will take over soon with a belligerent program to thrust its troubles on its neighbors. No guiding concepts seem to be available to explain why not. Intuition prompts that it is Germany or France that would be more likely to generate international situational threats if home conditions became bad enough. The British simply are not expected to transfer their multiple threat situation problems into the international environment.

No less fascinating is the interplay of threat perceptions connected to recent statements made first by Senator Fulbright and repeated later by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger. These men have said in public that if access to Middle East oil should be blocked permanently, the deprived industrial countries, acting under necessity, might use military force to right the situation. Most American observers would discount this veiled, issued threat almost completely but indications are clear that the foreign ministries of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were alarmed. The connection travels through some threat recognition imagery that is held almost universally by Arab elites. They believe that Israel has expansionist designs to forge a conquest empire from the Nile to the Euphrates and that the United States, being the principal supporter of Israel, must be a party to these plans (Michael W. Suleiman, "Attitudes of the Arab Elite Toward Palestine and Israel," APSR, 67 (June 1973), 482-89). On the other side, there is no lack of Israeli conviction that the real Arab objective is to annihilate the state of Israel and, literally, to drive the Israelis into the sea (Amos Perlmutter, "The Covenant of War," HARPER'S MAGAZINE, 248 (February 1974), 51-61). These threat provisions work on each other in a reverberating relationship. The insights on how the mutual threat process is sustained and on how it might be attenuated are largely lacking. The importance of reducing the cross-amplifications of threat provisions increases in instances such as the Arab-Israeli conflict because of the catalytic effect on the spreading of conflict in the international system. The meager conceptual advice simply is that sometimes a transitive effect results from the blocking of escape routes from situational threat and that aggressive international behavior results, but that, most of the time, this passing on of threat does not occur.

Certainly more encouraging is the extent to which national societies absorb the disadvantages and deprivations arising in international relations without doing anything very drastic in response. Such reflexive behavior often is

observed. The threat from the doubling and redoubling of posted crude oil prices, promising genuine ruin in scores of underdeveloped countries has not, as yet, elicited fierce calls for retaliation from these places. Japan, the most seriously threatened of the advanced industrial countries, far from beginning to mobilize retaliatory forces, has, so far, shown a quality close to docility in complying with the wishes of the Arab petroleum producing regimes. In another instance, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan have been much disturbed by the perceived threat from French nuclear tests in the Pacific but the typical French intransigence in refusing to stop the tests has been countered by little more than some demonstrations and appeals to the World Court.

One of the important purposes to be served by a new research effort directed at the phenomena of situational threat and the relationship to international behavior is to seek out more satisfying insights on tendencies and regularities. How an attack on the uncertainties of the subject can be organized is what we have attempted to suggest here. Nothing has been said on the particularities of contemporary situational threats. It is the task of empirical studies to explore these matters. On the other hand, some ordering ideas of use in research have been presented. To review and sum up finally, a world watch is needed to scan constantly and find the sources and identities of newly-appearing previsions of threat. In the second place, analytical procedures are required to trace the changes in the process of threat development in the most important cases. Lying between these two major tasks is the problem of learning more effective arts and skills for analyzing how the responses to threat take place under varying psychopolitical conditions.

Threat should be turned into a prominent organizing concept in the study of international relations if for no other reason than to supply more reliable early warnings of the advent of threats and to arrive at knowledge on how to control their developments.